

CONSUMER FACT SHEET

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Under Massachusetts regulations, an Issuing Authority (“IA”) may appoint a Cable Advisory Committee (“CAC”) to advise the IA throughout the licensing process. 207 C.M.R. § 3.01(3). In many instances, the CAC remains as an active committee throughout the term of the license. Currently, there are over two hundred and eighty CACs in the Commonwealth. The composition of the CAC is determined by the IA, and the IA may choose any number of persons it deems desirable to complete the committee.

The IA may, at its discretion, define the role and responsibilities of the CAC to the extent permitted under G.L. c. 166A. Thus, there is almost complete local control as to the tasks assigned to an advisory committee, so long as these tasks do not conflict with the statutory requirements of the IA in G.L. c. 166A. While an IA may delegate to a CAC the authority to negotiate a license agreement, an IA may not delegate authority to execute such an agreement.

CAC responsibilities vary according to the current status of the license or the objectives of the IA. The following list includes some typical responsibilities assigned to CACs in the Commonwealth:

- Inform and educate the public about cable television service;
- Assess the cable needs of the community and recommend policy changes;
- Conduct regular meetings with cable company representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest;
- Report to the IA on company compliance with the license;
- Supervise the cable operator’s response to complaints;
- Respond to citizen’s questions regarding the cable television system; and
- Keep abreast of community programming issues.

CACs are considered “governmental bodies” within the purview of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest law, G.L. c. 268A, and are subject to their guidelines.

Recognizing that CACs fulfill an important and valuable link between the IA, the licensee, and the citizens of the community, the Cable Division seeks to build positive professional relationships with the CACs. Our staff works closely with local committees to educate them on the licensing process and improve information-sharing. The Cable Division’s Municipal Liaison

program includes an informational presentation available to communities. Please feel free to contact the Cable Division's Municipal Liaison, Brian Merrick, to schedule a presentation or to discuss any cable licensing matter.

**Massachusetts Department of
Telecommunications & Energy
Cable Television Division**

One South Station
Boston, MA 02110

617-305-3580

Toll-Free in Massachusetts: 1-888-MA-CBL-TV
(1-888-622-2588)

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www.mass.gov/dpu/catv
cable.inquiry@state.ma.us